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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

WHEAT AND CHAFF.

A

COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

D. WADSWORTH WAINWRIGHT, M. D.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES ROE, PUBLISHER.
697 BROADWAY.

1858.

P5635
.Z9W142

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858,

By D. Wadsworth Wainwright,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

NEW YORK: BILLIN & BROTHER, PRINTERS, XX, NORTH WILLIAM STREET.

TMP92-007590

Inscribed

BY

HIS BROTHER

TO

J. HOWARD WAINWRIGHT, ESQ.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

With Cast as first performed in New York, on the 30th of October, 1858, *at* WALLACK'S THEATRE.

MALE.

JOB MERRYWEATHER ..... Mr. JOHN BROUGHAM.
ARTHUR BEAUFORT, *Nephew to* JOB .. Mr. LESTER WALLACK.
HERBERT VANE ..... Mr. CHAS. WHEATLEIGH.
CHARLES HEARTY ..... Mr. THOMAS CHANDLER.
DEUCE, *Proprietor of the Hell* ..... Mr. JOHN SLOAN.
THOMAS, *Servant to* MRS. GRAFTON ... Mr. F. CHIPPENDALE.
BOB, *Servant to* VANE ..... Mr. FLOYD.
BROWN, JONES, SMITH, ROBINSON, *Friends of* VANE. — Mr. LEVERE. Mr. TREE. Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. LASCELLES.
NEWSBOY ..... Mr. PARSLOE.
HACKMAN ..... Mr. BERNARD.
DEALER, *at Hell* ..... Mr. MASON.
WAITER, *at Hell* ..... Mr. OLIVER.

Promenaders in Street Scene. Players at Hell. Guests at Ball.

FEMALE.

MRS. GRAFTON ..... Mrs. GRATTAN.
HELEN GRAFTON ..... Mrs. HOEY.
BLANCHE GAY, *Niece of* MRS. GRAFTON .. Miss MARY GANNON.
BEGGAR ..... Miss CARMAN.

Promenaders in Street Scene. Guests at Ball.

Costume of the Present Day.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Vane's Apartment; Sofa and Table*, L. H.; *antique Writing-desk*, R. H.; *Chairs* R. *and* L.

SCENE II.—*Hall in Mrs. Grafton's House.*

SCENE III.—*Library in Mrs. Grafton's House; Table with Books*, L. H.; *Table*, R. H., *with Writing Materials; Sofa and Chairs*, R. *and* L.; *Piano*, R. H.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Arthur's Studio: Easel and small Table*, R. H.; *Table*, L. H., *with Writing Materials, Pipes, etc.; Chairs* R. *and* L.

SCENE II.—*Hall in Mrs. Grafton's House.*

SCENE III.—*View of Fifth Avenue from Fourteenth Street.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Same as in Act 1st; Library, opening into Drawing-room handsomely furnished.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Moonlight View of Union Square.*

SCENE II.—*Entrance to a Fashionable Hell.*

SCENE III.—*Fashionable Gambling Saloon; Faro Table*, R. H., *with all the appointments; Table*, L. H., *with Writing Materials.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Ball-room in Mrs. Grafton's House, handsomely furnished; Piano*, L. H.; *Chairs and Tables*, R. *and* L.; *Conservatory at back.*

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

C., *centre;* R., *right;* L., *left;* F., *front;* R. H., *right hand;* L. H., *left hand.*

WHEAT AND CHAFF.

Act First.

SCENE FIRST.

Apartments of HERBERT VANE. *At rising of Curtain,* VANE *discovered lying on Sofa.*

VANE, *alone.*

Here I am, a scion of uppertendom, an F. F. V. of Gotham; possessor, the world says, of ten thousand a year; I say, without a dollar in bank or pocket, save these [*takes bills from pocket*] paltry two hundred, proceeds of that watch I lent a friend, my uncle. My cursed luck at Paris, Baden-Baden, and at Deuce's has left me penniless, with more debts than coppers. Fortunately, tradesmen take it kindly when owed by a man of fashion! This cursed luck cannot always last—"there is a tide"—to day I feel the flood sets in. This very night I will make one last attempt to avert my ruin. Have a care, Deuce! [*Holds up bills.*] Here is the wedge to break either you or me. [*Returns bills to pocket, rings bell. Enter* BOB, *L. H., hands three notes on salver.*] Has any one called this morning?

BOB.

Yes, sir; Mr. Shears and Mr. Welt were here four times yesterday.

VANE, *aside.*

Tailor and bootmaker; beagles of the hunt. Now they are on the scent, to-morrow I shall have the whole pack after me in full cry—the devil catch the hindermost. [*Aloud.*] Any one else?

BOB.

Yes, sir; Miss Charlotte, she told me to tell you, unless you gave her back her watch, she would tell your father; said she was a-coming again, sir.

VANE.

Be sure you tell her I have left the city, and will be absent a month.

BOB.

Yes, sir.

VANE, *aside.*

Before that I shall either have gold in plenty, or have left forever.

BOB.

Any orders, sir?

VANE.

Not at present. [BOB *bows, exit, L. II.* VANE *opens first note, reads aloud.*] "Mrs. Fidget requests the pleasure—" Pleasure, bah! [*Opens second note.*] "Mrs. Stupid, very sociably—" Sociably, humbug! These are the vultures of society; they soar above in the firmament of fashion—ever watchful, ever restless—ready to pounce upon any simple lamb with a golden fleece; clutch it, bear it away to their own nests to fill the rapacious maw of one of their screeching brood—of all, if they could. I am no simple lamb. [*Puts down notes, opens third.*] "Mrs. Grafton will be happy to see Mr. Herbert Vane to-morrow, (Thursday) evening, at eight o'clock, very sociably. R. S. V. P., 150 Madison Square." Very sociably, again. Last year, in the flush times, this invitation would have been printed on a four by six card, with an "At Home," and sent two weeks before. Now, in hard times, "Very Sociably," is the polite excuse for poor suppers, and worse wine. "*Vive la Bagatelle.*" This is not a loving way to speak of one's

future mother-in-law—loving, bah! She is playing her game, I mine: she for position for herself, daughter, and an extra ten thousand a year; I, for her money alone, daughter thrown in. I know her hand, she does not mine. Now to answer these. [*Goes to desk, speaks while writing two notes.*] "Mr. Vane accepts with pleasure," etc. [*Folds first note.*] One must go every where, or he would soon be forgotten. [*Folds second note.*] These for Mrs. Fidget and Mrs. Stupid; now for Mrs. Grafton's. [*Speaks while writing third note.*] "My dear Mrs. Grafton, I accept with much pleasure your kind invitation for to-morrow evening, and shall do myself the honour of calling this afternoon, to offer to your loved daughter my hand and fortune." [*Speaks.*] More humbug! [*Writes.*] "I can delay no longer. I must know my fate, either for perfect happiness or eternal misery." [*Speaks.*] There's agony! [*Writes.*] "I hope, I trust, you will not use your all-powerful influence against me." [*Speaks.*] I have no fear of that—I have her safe—to her I am a saint. [*Writes.*] "With anxious heart I await your answer." [*Comes down the stage.*] This is a desperate game I am playing: I should loose, too, unless I had the odds. The girl loves my old friend and schoolfellow, Arthur—hates me; fortunately, I know—he does not—that the poor fool promised at her father's death-bed—she will keep her promise—to accept the man her mother chooses. Here he is. So promise, 'gainst love; promise wins, and the game is mine. Poor Arthur, I am sorry I have to play you false! I, the only man you ever confided in; however, I cannot draw back: it is too late. I am poor, and the stake is too large. So as poverty knows no friends, the game must go on.

ARTHUR, *outside.*

Halloo, Herbert, where are you?—show yourself.

VANE.

Speak of the devil— [ARTHUR, *enter C.*

ARTHUR.

Earthed at last; I've had a hunt for it. Why, you are as slippery and hard to find as an old fox! You never come near me.

VANE.

'Pon my life, that's cool! The first time you honour my batchelor quarters, you accuse me of neglect! Justice, my dear fellow—you owe me a hundred visits.

ARTHUR.

True bill: Minerva must apologize for me. I am her slave—she is a jealous mistress.

VANE.

And like the rest of her sex, thoroughly heartless.

ARTHUR.

Not thoroughly. She, like woman, smiles upon us sometimes; and we forget a thousand frowns in the enjoyment of one smile. I see you live decidedly "*En Prince.*"

VANE.

Now, my dear fellow! 'Pon my life, you flatter me. I live plainly—very plainly.

ARTHUR.

I should not suppose it. What an odd-looking desk! [*Points to desk.*] Where did you get it?

VANE.

Yes, rather. I got it in Rome. Look at it. [ARTHUR *goes towards desk.* VANE *starts up. Aside.*] By heavens! that letter! [*Aloud*] Arthur! Arthur!

ARTHUR.

Hallioo! You appear to be excited. What's the matter?

VANE.

Nothing: I want your opinion of that picture. [*Points to picture, on other side of stage.*] It is a gem—said to be a Claude! [*Aside.*] Any thing to stop him.

ARTHUR.

Ha! ha! ha! Very well done, Herbert—too late. I see—[*points to letter*]—a love letter to your last conquest! Come, tell me her name; I will be secret. [*Goes to picture.*]

VANE.

No, no! 'Pon my life, you are mistaken; it is only about a little matter of business—mere business. [*Goes to desk: covers up letter. Aside.*] He little thinks that business bodes him no good. [*Both come down stage. Sit.*]

ARTHUR.

Really, I cannot say much for your taste in pictures.

VANE.

No? Is it not a gem?

ARTHUR.

It is a daub!

VANE.

Then I have been sold. I must send it back. How have you spent the summer?

ARTHUR.

Sketching in the mountains—and you?

VANE.

As usual, following in the wake of fashion. Heard any news, ately?

ARTHUR.

Only two or three—new toy engagements.

VANE.

Toy engagements?

ARTHUR.

Yes; like toys, made to be broken. What matters it, if a few hearts break with them.

VANE.

Nothing. Sew them up with gold,—they are good as new.

ARTHUR.

The scar remains.

VANE.

Time obliterates scars: the gold remains. By-the-bye, how comes on your suit with Miss Grafton?

ARTHUR.

Well, as far as she is concerned. I dare not ask the mother. She does not admire poor men.

VANE.

'Pon my life, she does not.

ARTHUR.

I hear you have great influence with her; could you—you know, just—

VANE.

Plead for you? Certainly, my dear fellow. I shall be delighted to serve you. [*Aside.*] I cannot refuse; I have no reason.

ARTHUR.

I shall not forget it. I hate to ask a favour of any one—even you; still, I recall our old schooldays.

VANE.

So do I. How many scrapes we got into!

ARTHUR.

Yes, and such unlucky ones! We were always caught.

VANE.

You alone took the punishment.

ARTHUR.

That was right. I was the elder—I led you into mischief.

VANE.

I think not, if I remember correctly; however, right or wrong, it made me your sincere friend.

ARTHUR.

I believe you were, then; and will be, even now, for the sake of old times.

VANE.

Never fear, Arthur. I assure you, you can trust me.

ARTHUR, *takes* VANE'S *hand.*

I do not trust many; it is not safe. Why, I heard you were

devoted to Helen. I did not believe it. I could not distrust an old friend.

VANE.

Distrust everybody, my dear fellow. Each one has his price.

ARTHUR.

I cannot think that, though I am cynical.

VANE.

You cynical! mere imagination. Cynics have no hearts.

ARTHUR.

Cynic or not, I will trust you. You could not take my hand if you meant to deceive me.

VANE, *shakes hand violently.*

My dear fellow, you never knew me—you will.

ARTHUR.

I must, now—when I trust you with what is more to me than life. Good-bye. Let me hear from you.

VANE.

I will; you may rely upon me. [*Exit* ARTHUR, *C.* *Enter* ARTAUR, *C.*]

ARTHUR, *laughingly.*

I had forgotten—

VANE.

What?

ARTHUR.

To tell you, not to let my affair interfere with that little matter of business—[*points to desk*]—mere business. Send it at once, Herbert; it is unkind to keep her in suspense.

VANE.

Trust me. I will not.

ARTHUR.

Then good-bye, again. On that score [*points to desk*] my conscience is easy. [*Exit, C.*]

VANE, *goes to desk, takes letter.*

On this score his conscience is easy. Is mine? Bah! con-

science! What's conscience? A mere bugbear to frighten children. [*Speaks while folding note.*] The game goes on swimmingly. I have put Arthur off the scent. Then if Blackstone can hush up that cursed *faux pas* of mine in Paris, so the papers do not get it, all will be well. In a week I shall be on velvet. [*Rings bell. Enter* Bob, *L. H.*] Deliver these notes at once. Wait for Mrs. Grafton's answer.

BOB, *takes notes.*

Yes, sir. Will you drive the tilbury or dog-cart to-day, sir?

VANE.

Neither: I shall walk. When you return, stay at home. I expect a note from Mr. Blackstone; if it comes, bring it to me at Mrs. Grafton's immediately.

BOB.

Yes, sir. Any thing else, sir?

VANE.

Did you order the dinner at the club?

BOB.

Yes, sir—for twelve, sir—ready at six, sir.

VANE.

Very well: you can go. [*Exit* Bob, *L. H.*] The game's begun. Now to catch the queen. [*Exit* Vane, *R. H.*]

SCENE SECOND.

Hall at Mrs. Grafton's. *Enter, L. H.,* Bob *and* Thomas, *note in hand.*

BOB.

Well, old Beeswax, how goes it?

THOMAS.

So, so. Any thing up down town?

BOB.

The Bear garden's about?—stocks is up.

THOMAS.

What's that to you?

BOB.

Come, I like that—to me—I'm a Bull—I'm long.

THOMAS.

I thought you were short.

BOB.

Was, 'fore the 'spension. Gone in since on t'other side.

THOMAS.

What are you in? Are you in deep?

BOB.

No; a mere trifle. Fifty shares Dismal Swamp Draining Association—fifty Underground Railroad.

THOMAS.

Do they pay dividends, Bob?

BOB.

Guess they do. [*Aside.*] Out of the capital.

THOMAS.

Can't you let a feller in?

BOB.

I don't know—stock's mighty scarce. Seeing it's you, though, I'll sell you some of mine.

THOMAS.

Done. I'll take half.

BOB.

Sold. [*Turns, puts finger to nose.*] I say, old fellow, I can't stand here all day gassing. Start your pins. There's an answer to that note.

THOMAS.

You don't say so, my chicken! Where is it?

BOB.

Look a-here, old rooster, simmer down—switch off! [*Pushes*

THOMAS *off, R. H.*] Confounded old fogy don't know nothin',—has'n't cut his eye-teeth! I'll start 'em for him! I'll cut his gums! [*Comes down stage.*] Guess I must look out for 'nother place. That master of mine's pretty nigh played out. If this here gag, with that young woman up stairs, don't go down, there'll be a grand *kerflumux*. Let's see. I'll try him 'nother week. I want to be in at the death. Won't that be jolly? [*Enter* THOMAS, *R. H.*]

THOMAS.

Here's the answer. [*Hands note.*]

BOB.

You did stir your stumps, didn't you, old two-forty? [*Takes note.*] How's the old woman up stairs? She's a buster!

THOMAS.

Look here, young man; don't be saucy.

BOB.

Oh, dry up! I say, old Bustamente, can't we smile?

THOMAS.

We mought; there's some champagne down stairs.

BOB.

That's jolly. Come along, old mutton-head! let's sail in. [*Exeunt, L. H.* BOB *pulling* THOMAS *off.*]

SCENE THIRD.

Library—same. Enter HELEN, *C.*

HELEN, *alone.*

I know not why I am so sad this morning. There is no cause for it. Still, I cannot shake my sadness off. I feel a strange presentiment of approaching misfortune, of which I shall be the victim. I will not give way to the feeling; it can be but a fancy. Here comes Blanche; she will cheer me. [*Enter* BLANCHE, *C, singing.*] Where have you been? [*Sits.*]

BLANCHE.

Out shopping. [*Takes off bonnet, puts it away.*]

HELEN.

Who did you meet?

BLANCHE.

Any number of people.

HELEN.

Any one in particular?

BLANCHE.

Nobody, except that gawky Mary Sappy.

HELEN.

What did she have to say for herself?

BLANCHE.

Full of the hard times, as usual. Talked about economy—how poor she felt; then bought two silk dresses; "because, [*imitating*] you know, I can buy two now, for only ten dollars more than I used to pay for one." There's economy for you! Where's aunt?

HELEN.

Up-stairs, with the dress-maker.

BLANCHE.

I'm glad of it. [*Sits.*] Now we can have a nice long talk. When she is present, I am afraid to say a word. She watches me like a cat.

HELEN.

Blanche, I will not allow you to speak so. You know she loves you.

BLANCHE.

No, I don't. If she does, why is she always finding fault? It is nothing all day, but "Blanche, do this,"—"why have you not done it before?"—"go and do it at once."

HELEN.

She does it for your good.

BLANCHE.

She does it to show her power. Just because father made her my guardian, and left his property so I cannot have it until I am

twenty-one, unless I marry with her consent—that is the reason. For my good, indeed! Fortunately, I have only a year to wait, then.

HELEN.

I grant sometimes she is too severe. However, she says you are too wild—too fast: you know you are.

BLANCHE.

A girl, now-a-days, cannot dance or flirt the least mite with any one, without being called "wild," and "fast."

HELEN.

How, when she flirts with a great many ones?

BLANCHE, *laughingly.*

Well, I confess I have flirted considerably.

HELEN.

Shall I run through the list?

BLANCHE.

No, I thank you. I have it by heart.

HELEN.

Have they all a corner there? Charley would not like to think so.

BLANCHE.

No, Helen; they have not. I love that dear, stupid fellow too well. If he objected, I would stop it; but he don't mind it. I think he rather likes it.

HELEN.

Don't believe that, Blanche. No man likes to see the woman he loves, even appear interested in another.

BLANCHE.

Well, I won't flirt as hard next time. Now, have you finished your lecture?

HELEN.

Yes.

BLANCHE.

I should hope so. In attempting to remove the mote from my eye, of course you have forgotten that beam in your own.

HELEN.

I don't understand you.

BLANCHE.

Well done, Miss Simplicity. You are in love, and correspond with a man. Does your mother know it?

HELEN.

Not that I am aware of; but that is a very different matter.

BLANCHE.

Oh! ah! is it? [*Imitating* HELEN.] Don't believe that, Helen. No mother likes to see the daughter she loves even appear to correspond with a man. So aunt has not discovered it?

HELEN.

No.

BLANCHE.

Trust me, she will. I know her. How shall you act when she does?

HELEN.

Tell her how deeply, how fondly I love him.

BLANCHE.

What for, pray?

HELEN.

Why, she loves me, and will give her consent to our engagement.

BLANCHE.

Not a bit of it; she wishes you to marry that horrid—"Pon my life," [*imitates* VANE,] she will talk to you about "bringing her in sorrow to the grave," and all that sort of thing—implore you to make her happy.

HELEN.

You wrong her: she loves me too well.

BLANCHE.

Then, if that will not do, she will say: "My child, remember the solemn promise you have given."

HELEN.

I forgot that fatal promise.

BLANCHE.

Break it.

HELEN.

I dare not: it was given to the dead.

BLANCHE.

The dead had no right to ask it, so I would break it.

HELEN.

No, Blanche; sooner than do that, I will give up my love.

BLANCHE.

More fool you. [*Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Blanche, why are you not at your piano? go at once.

BLANCHE.

Yes, aunt. [*Aside, going.*] The old ogress! [*Exit, R. H.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Helen, I want to talk with you.

HELEN.

Well, my dearest mother, what is it?

MRS. GRAFTON.

Sit down. [*They sit.*] I am very much grieved. This morning, by accident, I opened your desk. I need not tell you what I found there. It made me very unhappy. I asked myself the painful question: Can my child love me—my only child—to carry on a clandestine correspondence?

HELEN, *aside.*

My presentiment of misfortune was too true.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I wish to know which you love the best—your mother or Mr. Beaufort?

HELEN, *aside.*

It comes very soon.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I acknowledge he is a gentleman—still he is poor—

HELEN, *interrupting.*

If that is his only fault, I have enough for both.

MRS. GRAFTON.

That is not the reason I object. I have lived longer than you, my child: believe me when I say Mr. Beaufort is not at all suited to make you happy.

HELEN.

I love him, mother.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Trust me, Helen, I know your nature—your affection for him would not last. You might be happy for a year; after that—I will not go on. I have pondered deeply upon your future happiness, passed many sleepless nights reflecting how I might best secure it, and fulfil the last command of your dead father—"Make my child happy." I have striven to do so.

HELEN.

Mother, I love him.

MRS. GRAFTON.

It is my sole aim in life to make you happy—to see you occupy the high position in the world for which you are so well fitted.

HELEN.

I love him, mother.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I have at last found the man to whom I can entrust your happiness. Helen, your mother tells you so—appeals to you whether you will be guided by her, or, clinging to your mistaken fancy, "bring her in sorrow to the grave?"

HELEN.

Mother, I love him.

MRS. GRAFTON.

You only fancy so. Mr. Vane loves you—will place you the

brightest gem of the circle in which he moves. And further, "remember the solemn promise you have given." Now, my child, I leave you to decide whether your mother shall be happy, or miserable. [*Going.*] Remember your promise! [*Exit, C.*]

HELEN.

I dare not forget it. [*Enter*, BLANCHE *R. H.*]

BLANCHE,

There, Helen, what did I tell you?

HELEN.

The truth.

BLANCHE.

What shall you do?

HELEN.

I will not break my word.

BLANCHE.

Then you do not love Arthur?

HELEN.

Not love him! I would give up my life for him; aye, every thing, save honour.

BLANCHE.

Take my advice: run away.

HELEN.

No, Blanche; my heart may break, but I will keep my promise. [*Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C., unperceived.*]

BLANCHE.

You are a fool for your trouble.

MRS. GRAFTON.

When your advice is wanted, Blanche, it will be asked for. You can leave the room.

BLANCHE.

Yes, aunt. [*Aside, going.*] The hyena! [*Exit, R. H.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Helen, have you decided?

HELEN.

Mother, I will marry Mr. Vane.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I am thankful. Now, my dear, write to Mr. Beaufort. Tell him your decision, and request him to return your letters. His I have sealed up in this packet. [*Takes packet from pocket.*] I shall send them with your note. I also have written to him. [*Helen goes to table—writes.*] Mr. Vane wrote me that he should call this afternoon. [*Bell outside rings.*] Probably that is he. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C. Hands card on salver to* MRS. GRAFTON. HELEN *gives note to* MRS. GRAFTON. *To* THOMAS.] Take these [*places packet and notes on salver*] to Mr. Beaufort's. Wait for an answer.

THOMAS.

Yes, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Tell Susan to tend the door. If any one calls, to say we are engaged.

THOMAS.

Yes, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON, *looks at card.*

Show the gentleman up. [THOMAS *bows, exit, C.*] Helen, it is Mr. Vane. I leave you, in trust I may return happy. [*Exit, R. H.*]

HELEN.

That fatal promise! Poor Arthur! How heartless will he think me when he reads my note. It is better so. He will the sooner forget me. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Herbert Vane. [*Enter* VANE, *C., exit* THOMAS, *C.*]

VANE.

Good morning, Miss Helen. [HELEN *bows coldly. They sit.*] I hope your mother has informed you of the object of my visit. [HELEN *bows.*] Helen, I have long loved you with a sincere and deep devotion. I offer you my hand and heart. [*Kneels.*] I implore you not to refuse making me the happiest of men. [*Enter* BOB, *C., hurriedly.*]

BOB.

Here's the note, sir. [VANE *starts up.*]

VANE, *aside.*

Confound the fellow! [*Takes note. Addresses* HELEN.] Pardon this interruption. I expected a communication from my lawyer on a very important matter, and told my servant to bring it to me immediately. Allow me to open it. [HELEN *bows.* VANE *comes down, R. H., opens note. Drops note accidentally while returning it to pocket, during business.*]

BOB, *aside.*

He was a-doing it up that time, he was.

HELEN, *aside.*

There is one hope left. I will appeal to him. If he is a man, he will resign me.

VANE, *to* BOB.

You can go, sir. There is no answer.

BOB.

Yes, sir. [*Aside, going.*] Sha'n't I catch Jessie! [*Exit, C.*]

VANE.

You will not destroy my hopes—tell me you return my love.

HELEN.

Mr. Vane, I do not love you; my heart is irrevocably given to another. If you do not wish to see me die, go, leave, resign me; there are better, handsomer, richer women than I, who can and will love you.

VANE.

Helen, I cannot; I love you too fondly. No other woman could compensate me for your loss. I am too great a coward; I dare not destroy my dream of bliss.

HELEN.

Be it so; there is my hand. [VANE *takes hand.*] To keep my promise, I sacrifice myself; but beware, it is soft now, it will be ice hereafter!

VANE.

I will thaw it with my kisses. [*Kisses hand.* MRS. GRAFTON *enters at C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Daughter, you have made me happy. [*Embraces* HELEN.]

HELEN.

Mother, you have made me miserable. [VANE *comes down, L. H.,* BLANCHE *enters R. H., picks up note dropped by* VANE; *opens it, appears to read.*]

VANE, *aside.*

The game is won; I've caught the queen.

BLANCHE, *aside.*

I will catch the knave.

[*Tableau.*

End of First Act.

Act Second.

SCENE FIRST.

Studio of ARTHUR BEAUFORT. *Enter* JOB, *R. H.*

JOB, *alone.*

As I live, not bad quarters for a poor artist. [*Enter* ARTHUR, *L. H., smoking.*]

ARTHUR.

Uncle Job, how are you? I am very glad to see you. How well you are looking. [*Shake hands.*]

JOB.

Same to you, my boy.

ARTHUR.

Let me take your coat off. [*Helps him to remove coat, also takes hat and cane, places them on table.*] Now sit down; make yourself at home.

JOB.

You may depend upon it I will. [*They sit.*]

ARTHUR.

When did you leave home? How are they all? and how is old Carlo?

JOB.

I left this morning. They are all well, dogs and all; as for old Carlo, he sent a bark and a wag of his tail for you.

ARTHUR.

Dear old fellow! I should like to see his hairy face again. What can I offer you after your journey? Some brandy and water?

JOB.

No brandy and water for me. Give me ale—glorious ale; it leaves no sting, and laughs with you while you drink it. Ale for me, my boy, provided your cellar contains it.

ARTHUR.

Certainly it does. I am a Son of Malta.

JOB.

At your old tricks, are you? Horrible!

ARTHUR.

Pardon me, I could not help it. [*Gets ale, opens it, gives* JOB.] Will you have a segar or pipe with your ale?

JOB.

A pipe, if you have one convenient. [ARTHUR *gives* JOB *pipe*—JOB *lights it.*] Now I feel cosy and comfortable. [ARTHUR *sits.*]

ARTHUR.

Well, uncle, how did the hard times affect you farmers?

JOB.

Not very severely. We had many things to be thankful for. Kind nature lent us a helping hand; blessed us with great crops, so we suffered but little. How was it with Art?

ARTHUR.

We artists suffered greatly. No commissions: on the other hand, some of our rich, generous patrons were so liberal as to

withdraw, even those given before the panic—merely making the hard times serve as an excuse for meanness.

JOB.

I'd sooner have the picture than be owed for it. I see you are not changed. Same as ever—ever looking on the dark side.

ARTHUR.

That is the safest philosophy, at least in this age of brass.

JOB.

Not the truest; certainly not the happiest. Would you shut out the bright sky for the one little cloud which specks it? I hope not.

ARTHUR.

Uncle, we are always at war on that point.

JOB.

Yes, my boy; but trust me, I shall conquer in the end.

ARTHUR.

Perhaps so. When the world becomes flat—I beg its pardon—it is flat enough already.

JOB.

Lord it bravely, while you can. My turn will come: then you shall cry *peccavi*. So, my modern Xeno, despite your cynical ideas of women, you are hooked at last.

ARTHUR.

I confess it.

JOB.

Who is the witch that has performed such a miracle?

ARTHUR.

The daughter of your old love.

JOB.

What! Helen Grafton?

ARTHUR.

Even so. By-the-bye, uncle, you never told me about your flirtation with the mother.

JOB.

Flirtation, Arthur! It was no flirtation; it was a sad reality. It is not a pleasant remembrance. Still, as my experience may benefit you, I will relate it. Catharine and I were children together—grew up together. She was my little wife—so I loved to call her. I loved her fondly—devotedly. I believe she returned it. Well, we were engaged. I was happy. It lasted but a moment. Her father would not consent. He said I was too poor, and advised her to give me up. She took his advice—gave me up—married another. Ah! ah! The wound was deep; the scar is yet tender.

ARTHUR.

Can you forgive her?

JOB.

I have. She was very young then; she knew not how much I loved her.

ARTHUR.

After that, you look on the bright side?

JOB.

Yes, my dear boy. I am no misanthrope, to shun the whole for the unkindness of one; I love woman too well. I did not banish myself from the world. No, I entered in its enjoyments—not its extravagancies; in that course, I found consolation. Now, the past is but a softened shadow.

ARTHUR.

Did you never love another?

JOB.

No, Arthur. True love is eternal; it is a spring in the desert. The sands of time may fill—the growth of weeds may choke it; yet memory, like an oasis, marks the spring—still there, though silent. Away with sad thoughts: life is too short for regret. Tell me, my boy, what sort of girl Helen is.

ARTHUR.

She does not wear hoops ten feet in diameter!

JOB.

That is rather a negative character.

ARTHUR.

Well, uncle, she is a noble girl; good, kind, affectionate, and accomplished.

JOB.

Is she handsome? is she a belle?

ARTHUR.

The world says so.

JOB.

Does she waltz?

ARTHUR.

No, indeed; I would as soon have the woman I love hugged in a dark room, alone, as in a crowd.

JOB.

Last, but not least, does she love you?

ARTHUR.

I believe she loves me, and will continue to do so; that is, if she be not tried too severely. I say tried, for I am rather skeptical in regard to woman's constancy.

JOB.

Skeptical? In my day, a woman would give her own life for the man she loved.

ARTHUR.

And her mother, uncle?

JOB.

Well, "exceptions prove the rule."

ARTHUR.

I say tried, for her mother has unbounded influence over her. I fear, if she willed it, Helen might retract.

JOB.

In that case, what would you do?

ARTHUR.

Do!--Why—[*Knock at door, R. H.*] Come in. [*Enter* THOMAS, *R. H. Hands two notes and packet to* ARTHUR.] Uncle, permit me.

JOB.

Certainly, my dear boy. [*Comes down, L. H., opens notes and reads aloud, aside.*]

ARTHUR.

"Mr. Beaufort:—Let the past be forgotten: I am engaged to Mr. Vane. I send your letters, and request you will return mine by the bearer. I remain yours very respectfully, Helen Grafton." [*Speaks aside.*] Can this be real, or am I dreaming? [*Looks at letter and* THOMAS.] It is true! So cold and heartless! Not one kind word. Engaged, and to Herbert. "Misfortunes never come single;" the only woman I ever loved, deceives me—the only man I ever trusted, betrays me. The blow strikes home; I feel it here; [*puts hand to heart;*] but the brain, shall subdue the heart.

JOB.

What is the matter, Arthur?—you appear moved. Is there any bad news in that note?

ARTHUR.

Bad news!—read it. [*Gives* JOB *note.*] It is a model "*billet doux.*" [*Goes to draw, takes out packet, during business*—JOB *reads note—speaks aside.*]

JOB.

The poor boy feels it more than his actions show.

ARTHUR.

That is all, Thomas. [*Hands packet to* THOMAS. THOMAS *takes packet, bows, exit R. H.*]

JOB.

Now it is done, Arthur, what shall you do? [*Hands back note to* ARTHUR.]

ARTHUR.

Humph! Light another cigar. [*Lights cigar with note.*]

JOB, *aside.*

Bravely done.

ARTHUR.

Let me see what this contains. [*Opens second note, reads aloud.*] "Mrs. Grafton will be happy to see Mr. Beaufort to-morrow, (Thursday) evening, at eight o'clock. Very sociably." [*Aside.*] A sop for Cerberus. [*Aloud.*] I must write an answer.

JOB.

What will it be?

ARTHUR.

An acceptance, of course. [*Goes to table, writes.*]

JOB.

That's right, Arthur, let her go; there are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.

ARTHUR.

I shall fish no more; I cannot bait my hook with gold. [*Comes down stage.*] Now, that is finished, suppose we take a stroll; I shall paint no more to-day, my head aches; I think a walk will relieve it.

JOB.

I have no objection. Where shall we go?

ARTHUR.

Any where—I care not—to the devil, if you wish.

JOB.

Pray, excuse me—not just yet. No doubt he would be glad to see us, but I am not dressed for Grace. [*Enter* CHARLES HEARTY, *R. H.*]

CHARLEY.

How are you, Arthur? [*They shake hands.*] My dear fellow, I truly sympathize with you. Halloo—who's that? [*Motions to* JOB.]

ARTHUR.

My Uncle Job. Uncle, allow me to introduce my friend, Charley Hearty.

JOB.

I am happy to know you, sir. [*They shake hands.*]

CHARLEY.

You honour me, sir; I have often heard Arthur speak of you. [*Aside, to* ARTHUR.] Does he know any thing about it? [*Motions to* JOB.]

ARTHUR.

Yes; never mind him—speak out.

CHARLEY.

I received a note from Blanche, an hour ago, saying Helen had accepted Herbert Vane. I was very busy; still I could not help running up town, to tell you how much I feel for you. Can I be of any service?

ARTHUR.

No, I thank you, Charley. You see I can bear it—it has not killed me.

JOB.

Mr. Hearty, my nephew is a cynic.

CHARLEY.

I do not know what that is, sir. This I do know—if Blanche had treated me so, I would—I don't know what I wouldn't do.

ARTHUR.

Do as I do, "grin and bear it."

CHARLEY.

I couldn't do that. I should like to remain with you, but business before pleasure: I must go back to the office. Arthur, I have a case at last.

ARTHUR.

I am delighted to hear it. What is it?

CHARLEY.

A quarantine case.

ARTHUR.

Not a yellow fever case?

CHARLEY.

Not exactly. I am going to indict the police.

JOB.

What for, may I ask?

ARTHUR.

Because they "locked the stable-door after the horse was stolen," I suppose.

CHARLEY.

He has hit it, sir. Well, I must go, or I shall be too late for the grand jury.

ARTHUR.

Look in at Delmonico's as you go down town.

CHARLEY.

I will. Good-bye, Arthur.

ARTHUR.

Good-bye, Charley. [*Shake hands.*]

CHARLEY, *to* JOB.

Good-day, sir.

JOB.

Good-day. [CHARLEY *bows exit, R. H.*]

ARTHUR.

He is a good fellow, uncle; education would have made him a brilliant. He sees life through a prism.

JOB.

Better so than through a camera. Who is this Herbert Vane?

ARTHUR.

A rich man, a man of fashion, and the acknowledged leader of the German. Until to-day, I thought him my best friend.

JOB.

And he betrays you?

ARTHUR.

Certainly; that is the "way of the world."

JOB.

A noble character, indeed! Suppose we start.

ARTHUR.

I will be with you in a moment. [*Exit, L. H.*]

JOB, *alone.*

My dear boy is unhappy. I see it, though he strives to blind me by his affected indifference. Ah! the crust of pride; be it ever so thick on the face, the heart can be felt pulsating beneath. [*Enter* ARTHUR, *L. H., with hat and coat.*]

ARTHUR.

Pardon this detention.

JOB.

Do not speak of it. It has given me a moment for reflection. That never harms one. Are you ready? [*During speech* ARTHUR *helps* JOB *put on coat, etc.*]

ARTHUR.

I am at your service. [*Looks at watch.*] It is now three o'clock. Fashion and folly will be in high flight.

JOB.

Then we will take a flight with them. [*Exeunt, R. H.*]

SCENE SECOND.

Hall at MRS. GRAFTON'S. *Bell outside, L. H., rings violently. Enter* THOMAS, *R. H., putting on coat. Crosses opens door, L. H. Enter* BOB *hurriedly, pushing* THOMAS *aside, has newspaper in hand.*

BOB.

Here's a jolly row—I don't think.

THOMAS.

I should think there was. Do you want to pull the house down?

BOB.

Simmer down, old doughface! None of your airs—it won't do.

THOMAS.

I see you're saucy as ever.

BOB.

That's so, old hoss. Has that master of mine gone?

THOMAS.

No.

BOB.

Then he's lucky. Go, fetch him here right off.

THOMAS.

What for?

BOB.

Think I'm jolly green, don't you, old puddin'-head? Travel. [*Pushes* THOMAS *off, R. II.*] Here's a go! [*Comes down stage. Reads paper aloud.*] "Monstrous degradation in our upper circles! Horrible depravity in high life! A villain in upper-tendom unmasked! The subject of this article, a Mr. Herbert Vane, may be seen daily driving through our most fashionable streets in a dog-cart, with an impudent puppy of a servant perched behind." [*Speaks.*] That's me. If I ever see the fellow what wrote that, the way I'll maul him won't be slow. [*Enter* VANE, *R. II.*]

VANE.

Well, sir, what do you want?

BOB.

Read that, sir. [*Hands newspaper. Aside.*] That's a sweetener for him.

VANE, *aside.*

I did not think they would dare publish it; that cursed Blackstone should have stopped it.

BOB.

Do you see what they say about me, sir?

VANE.

Yes, for once they tell the truth.

BOB, *aside.*

I'll pay him off for that. [*Aloud.*] Do you think so, sir? they say, "like master like man."

VANE, *aside.*

Confound his impudence! [*Aloud.*] Well, sir, have you any other pleasant communication?

BOB.

Yes, sir. Miss Charlotte is at your room.

VANE, *aside.*

Curse the luck! [*Aloud.*] Did you tell her I had left the city?

BOB.

Yes, sir. She said that was no go; you'd tried that dodge before; she was a-going to wait till you come home. [*Aside.*] Guess I was into him that time.

VANE, *aside.*

If she should discover where I am! [*Aloud.*] Bob.

BOB.

Yes, sir.

VANE.

I wish you to go home at once. Watch her. Do not let her out of your sight for a moment.

BOB.

No, sir.

VANE.

When she leaves, follow her until she goes home, then go to the club and wait for me.

BOB.

Yes, sir. Any thing else, sir?

VANE.

No; you can go.

BOB.

Yes, sir. [*Aside, going.*] Just let me catch that paper chap, won't I punch his head! Oh! no! ne'er a bit! [*Exit, L. H.*]

VANE, *alone.*

The meshes of the net begin to draw about me; how shall I escape them? Why, put on a bold face, they will give way themselves. What if my wife that is to be should see this? I care

not; as for the mother—[*imitates a jumping-john with his hands*] —courage! courage! "*Vive la bagatelle!* A year abroad, and this [*puts paper in pocket*] will be forgotten. [*Going.*] Boldness yet shall win the game. [*Exit, R. H.*]

SCENE THIRD.

A View in Fifth Avenue, near Fourteenth Street. During scene, promenaders pass to and fro at back of stage. Enter NEWSBOY, *L. H., running.*

NEWSBOY.

Here's the *Extra Herald!* Grand exposy in Fifth Avenue! [*Exit, R. H. Enter* JOB *and* ARTHUR, *L. H.*]

ARTHUR.

We are now within the sacred precincts [*takes off hat*] dedicated to the worship of the insane goddess Fashion. Let us tread lightly, or her votaries will destroy us. If we stand here, uncle, in an hour we shall see pretence and folly enough for a century.

JOB.

"All are not perfect." However, we will stop; you shall be the Asmodeus to "open the doors," and "disclose the secrets of the prison-house."

ARTHUR.

Wisdom's prison-house, indeed—folly's palace.

JOB.

Leave folly alone, it will kill itself.

ARTHUR.

I say, shoot it as it flies.

JOB.

So be it, shoot. [*Pointing towards 14th street.*] Who is he in yon superb carriage, reclining vulgarly on its damask cushions?

ARTHUR.

Goitfast, the great speculator. Failed last week for half a million.

JOB.

Did his creditors not seize?

ARTHUR.

Nothing. Every thing settled on his wife. They fare sumptuously every day. The creditors starve.

JOB.

A gilded tomb.

ARTHUR.

No, uncle,—brass!

BOB.

Whom have we here? [*Points off.*] A woman, gorgeously apparelled, in an equipage fit for an empress.

ARTHUR.

Mrs. Parvenue, a satellite of fashion's orb; a suppliant at aristocracy's temple-gate. Gave a ball last winter; invited everybody,—only the men went. The gate is barred to her forever.

JOB.

Rather severe.

ARTHUR.

Severe, but just. Look there. [*Points off.*] Do you see that plain carriage—the gray haired couple within?

JOB.

Yes; what of them?

ARTHUR.

They are the true aristocrats. Of their abundance, they give willingly; they need no placard to herald their munificence; you may "read it in the hearts of the poor."

JOB.

True charity is ever a sunny picture. [*A woman dressed in black crosses stage at back, quickly.*] Who is this, running from door to door—a beggar, in silk?

ARTHUR.

One of that class who go about, "clothing the naked," "feeding the hungry," hushing the "cry of the children," while the little

ones at home sob, "mother, where are you?"—leave their own nests to tend another's young. Philanthropy without virtue—charity, without justice!

JOB.

Yet there are many noble women who sacrifice themselves in doing their whole duty.

ARTHUR.

True. Still, "life is a caldron,"—the scum will rise to the top.

JOB.

What does that mean? [*Points off.*] Strange sight! carriage and horses placarded "for sale!"

ARTHUR.

That is the "new way to pay old debts." Owner fails for millions, offers assets—horses and carriage—one thousand!

JOB.

If I listen to you much longer, I shall buy me a lamp, then search for an honest man.

ARTHUR.

Do not put it in a "Dark Lantern." [*Enter* DEUCE, *R. H. Bows to* ARTHUR. *He returns it.* DEUCE, *exit, L. H.*]

JOB.

Who is your fashionable friend?

ARTHUR.

The great Deuce; a patron of the arts—one of the "Lions" of the metropolis.

JOB.

What! a Yankee lion?

ARTHUR.

No; an Irish tiger—gives a supper every night—for which you pay—in chips!

JOB.

In chips? Ha! ha! ha! I comprehend. As a stranger, should like to see this modern Hades.

ARTHUR.

Suppose we drop in this evening?

JOB.

I agree.

ARTHUR.

But, uncle—

JOB.

Well?

ARTHUR.

Beware the *tiger.*

JOB.

Never fear, my boy; he has no claw for me. [NEWSBOY *enters, R. H.*]

NEWSBOY.

'Ere's the *Extra Herald!* Grand exposy in Fifth Avenue! Great broil among the codfish!

JOB.

Halloo, boy, what is that?

NEWSBOY.

Sixpence.

JOB.

I did not mean that. Never mind, here's your sixpence. [*Gives money—takes paper—reads.*]

NEWSBOY, *aside.*

Country! I made three cents out of the old codger, anyhow. I'll poke another into him: if I don't, blow me. [*Aloud—going.*] 'Ere's the *Extra Herald!* Grand exposy in Fifth Avenue! [*Exit, L. H.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

This battle of brain and heart: will it never cease?

JOB.

A grand *exposé*, indeed! Your rival is the hero. Read it. [*Gives paper to* ARTHUR. *He takes it.*]

ARTHUR.

It is too much trouble. [*Twists paper, and throws it down.*] It would be time wasted. [*Enter* NEWSBOY, *L. H., running.*]

NEWSBOY.

'Ere's the *Extra Herald*—third edition. Further dewelop-

ments of the great broil. [*To* JOB.] I'm your boy, sir. Third edition. [*Offers paper.*]

JOB.

Let me have it.

NEWSBOY.

Money fust, sir.

JOB.

You little rascal! [*Holds up cane.*] Well, there is your money. [*Gives money.*] Perhaps you are right in trusting no one. [*Takes paper; looks at it.*] Why, I do not see any further developments.

NEWSBOY.

It's on the inside, sir. [*Aside.*] What a jolly green un he is! —it's same as t'other. Guess I hadn't better vamose mighty sudden—Oh, no! [*Steals off on tiptoe, L. H.*]

JOB.

I cannot find it. What is this?—"first edition." My boy, you have made a mistake. [*Turns.*] Not here! Then the little rascal meant to cheat me; and there he is, [*points off stage, L. H.,*] running as if for dear life. Here, you boy!

ARTHUR.

What is it, uncle?

JOB.

Why, that little villain has swindled me. He has sold me two of the same edition. I must go after him.

ARTHUR.

No use, uncle. He is round the corner by this time.

JOB.

That boy is a smart one. He will be mayor one of these days.

ARTHUR.

You have bought your experience cheap.

JOB.

Yes; I will put this one in my pocket, [*puts paper in pocket,*] to remind me in future to keep my eyes open.

ARTHUR.

Man is a treacherous animal. Ah! [*looking off, R. H.,*] here comes the hero, with his "*fiancée*" and her mother. [*Enter* VANE *and* HELEN *arm in arm.* MRS. GRAFTON *side of* HELEN, *R. H. Enter* BOB, *L. H., running. Speaks to* VANE.]

BOB, *aside.*

There she is, sir. [*Points off, L. H.*]

VANE.

The devil!

BOB.

No, sir; Miss Charlotte. [*Aside.*] That wasn't bad. [*Exit, R. H.*]

VANE.

Helen, I must leave you. I have an engagement at four o'clock.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Will you not dine with us?

VANE.

I regret I cannot. I give a dinner at the club to-day. Good-bye, Helen. [*Offers hand.* HELEN *refuses. He bows. Exit, R. H., hurriedly.*]

JOB, *aside to* ARTHUR.

A loving couple!

ARTHUR, *aside to* JOB.

Truth and Virtue!

MRS. GRAFTON.

Why, Mr. Merryweather! I am delighted to see you. [*Shake hands. Bows to* ARTHUR.]

HELEN, *aside.*

Arthur here? [*Bows to* ARTHUR.]

JOB.

Thank you. Well, Helen, how do you do? [*Shake hands.*]

HELEN.

In body, well; in mind—

MRS. GRAFTON, *interrupting.*

When did you arrive?

JOB.

This morning. I intended calling.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Come and dine with us. Strictly "*en-famille.*" Only Mr. Hearty.

JOB.

I will, with pleasure.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I shall be happy to see Mr. Beaufort, also.

ARTHUR.

Pray excuse me, I am already promised.

HELEN, *aside.*

Surely he could not come.

ARTHUR, *aside.*

This is done to try me. I will go—[*aloud*]—however, I will call this evening, if agreeable.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I shall be pleased to see you.

HELEN, *aside.*

I might have known he would.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Remember, Mr. Merryweather, I shall expect you. We dine at five. [*To* HELEN.] Come, daughter, let us continue our walk.

HELEN.

Mother, I shall go home. [*Aside.*] I can bear this no longer.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Very well, my child. Good afternoon, gentlemen. [*Bows. Exit* MRS. GRAFTON *and* HELEN, *R. H.* JOB *escorts them to wing.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

I feel I love her yet, in spite of all. [JOB *comes down stage.*]

JOB, *aside.*

Well, well, I find the scar throbs even now. [*Aloud.*] Come, Arthur, let us walk.

ARTHUR.

It is late. I must go home and dress.

JOB.

Very well; I will take a stroll before dinner. If I do not see you before, where shall we meet to-night?

ARTHUR.

At the Union Place Hotel, at eleven o'clock.

JOB.

I will be there. "*Au revoir.*"

ARTHUR.

"*Au revoir.*" [*Aside, going.*] I almost begin to doubt the truth of my philosophy. [*Exit, L. H.*]

JOB.

Poor boy! I wish I could give him happiness. That is the only "remedy for a mind diseased." Unfortunately I cannot. [*Going, R. H., meets* BLANCHE *entering, R. H.*]

BLANCHE.

Why, Cousin Job, when did you come to town?

JOB.

This morning. And how is my little torment?

BLANCHE.

Very well. Why have you not been to see us?

JOB.

I have not had time. However, I am going to dine with you.

BLANCHE.

How fortunate! You are the very person I wanted to see.

JOB.

Is it your gracious pleasure to tell me why?

BLANCHE.

Yes, my lord, you can aid me.

JOB.

In what new piece of mischief?

BLANCHE.

None, this time.

JOB.

Now I am curious.

BLANCHE.

I want you to help me break off Helen's engagement.

JOB.

Why?

BLANCHE.

She detests the hypocrite she is betrothed to.

JOB.

Then, why does she not break it off?

BLANCHE.

She cannot. Do you not remember the promise she made at uncle's death-bed?

JOB.

I had forgotten it.

BLANCHE.

Her mother holds her to it.

JOB.

How can I assist you?

BLANCHE.

By appealing to aunt. I know you used to love her. She has not forgotten it. Now, if you will only appeal, she may be prevailed upon to change her mind. Won't you do it—that's a good cousin?

JOB.

Stop! stop! Not so fast. What, if she refuse?

BLANCHE.

Will you try?

JOB.

I will; still I doubt my success.

BLANCHE.

If you do not succeed, I have a plot which shall.

JOB.

What is this great plot?

BLANCHE.

That you shall know when I hear the result of your appeal.

JOB.

Rather impudent that, Miss. I suppose I must be satisfied to wait your ladyship's pleasure.

BLANCHE.

Yes, my lord. Come, cousin Job, let us go, or we shall be late for dinner. Remember the appeal.

JOB.

Yes; then if persuasion does not win—[BLANCHE *takes* JOB'S *arm.*]

BLANCHE.

We must try *finesse.* [*Exeunt, R. H. Enter* NEWSBOY, *L. H. hands in pocket—whistling.*]

NEWSBOY.

I've done it up to-day, I have. I ha'int got one left. A murder extra's some, but an exposy goes off like hot cakes. Halloo, what's that? [*Picks up paper thrown down by* ARTHUR—*untwists it.*] Golly, if it ain't one of them hidentical ones that old codger got; I know'd it, cause they was both fust editions I sold him. "Jimminy wee, Peters!" wasn't he jolly green! Grass aint nothing to him! [*Smoothes paper, puts under arm.*] Guess I'll sell some other old lummux. [*Going, calls.*] 'Ere's the *Extra Herald!*—grand exposy in Fifth avenue!—great broil among the codfish! 'Ere you are, sir, I'm your boy; I'm the only one what's got the third edition. [*Exit, R. H.*]

[*End of Act Second.*]

Act Third.

SCENE FIRST.

Library at MRS. GRAFTON'S. *At rising of Curtain,* MRS. GRAFTON *and* JOB MERRYWEATHER *discovered seated on Sofa.* HELEN *and* ARTHUR *by Table.* ARTHUR *reading Book on Table.* BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY *playing Chess.*

CHARLEY.

Check to the queen.

BLANCHE.

No knight shall capture this queen.

CHARLEY.

One will—with a bishop.

ARTHUR, *reading.*

"Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves." [*Speaks to* HELEN.] Such a man is a fool! Do you not think so?

HELEN.

No; for there is "that within which passeth show."

MRS. GRAFTON.

And you, once so great a beau, dislike society?

JOB.

Yes; it has sadly changed since my day. Then, it was an arena for the display of wit and intellect; now, it has become a play-ground for children.

MRS. GRAFTON.

You would not banish youth?

CHARLEY.

No check!

JOB.

Not if they pay that deference which age and gray hairs deserve. Alas! how is it? I give a party; I, the head of the

house, am nobody; my feet are trod upon; I am jostled into a corner, and that without a word of apology, save, perhaps, the half-muttered speech, "Serves him right! what business has the 'old fogy' to get in the way!" In fact, I'm treated as an intruder in my own home.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I confess the picture is truthful; yet, in their spring-time, we must deal gently with youth and beauty.

JOB.

Beauty? The bright flowers which toss their heads within the circle, I grant, have beauty; for sweetness, however, give me those which grow against the wall.

BLANCHE.

Check. Take care, or I shall win the game.

CHARLEY.

Beauty always wins.

JOB.

I fear I have been very prosy. Come, Helen, enliven us with a song.

HELEN.

Pray excuse me: I cannot sing to-night.

MRS. GRAFTON, *to* JOB.

Helen is not in voice this evening. [*To* ARTHUR.] Will Mr. Beaufort favour us?

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Another trial. [*Aloud.*] Certainly, if it is any gratification. What shall it be?

MRS. GRAFTON.

Helen shall choose.

ARTHUR, *to* HELEN.

I await your orders.

HELEN.

I am at a loss.

ARTHUR.

What say you to "The spell is broke," or "One struggle more, and I am free?"

HELEN.

Either you wish; or any other simple ballad. [*Aside.*] A shot at me.

ARTHUR.

I sing nothing else, for I hate your modern "would-be operatic," bad singing, and worse Italian. [*Crosses stage to* BLANCHE.]

HELEN, *aside.*

Another shot.

ARTHUR, *to* BLANCHE.

Will you accompany me?

BLANCHE.

With pleasure. [*They go to piano.* BLANCHE *plays,* ARTHUR *sings.*]

THE WHEAT BLOSSOM.

MUSIC BY GEO. F. BRISTOW.

I.

"In childhood's hour of 'long ago,'
In dawn of youth I wandered free;
Nor dreamt that I should ever know
The bow of love was bent at me.

II.

"I sported wild through meadows green,
'Mid autumn leaves, in youthful glee;
I never thought, till thee I'd seen,
I should love's captive ever be.

III.

"The dawn is past, the day has broke,
On earth I'll ne'er again be free;
In smiling tears I'll bear the yoke—
Love's captive through eternity."

MRS. GRAFTON.

Mr. Beaufort, I thank you. [ARTHUR *bows.*]

JOB.

It is a beautiful song. Who wrote it?

ARTHUR.

A friend of mine; he wrote it in a moment of happiness. It was ephemeral.

HELEN, *aside.*

That song is the hardest shot of all; it sinks deep.

ARTHUR, *to* BLANCHE.

Miss Blanche, I owe you an apology for the trouble I have given.

BLANCHE.

Not at all. You are welcome. Now, Mr. Hearty, to finish our game: I left you in check—nearly mated. [*Goes to table.*]

CHARLEY, *aside.*

I wish I was. [*They sit.*]

HELEN, *aside.*

To choose that song, the very one he wrote for me. Unkind. No, I deserve it. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

THOMAS.

The girl from the milliner's, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I will be with her in a moment. [THOMAS *bows. Exit, C.*] Excuse me, gentlemen, I must leave Helen to entertain you.

JOB.

I am sure she will not refuse. [*Exit* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

I can bear this scene no longer. The sad memories which that song recalls unman me. I must go, or I shall forget myself. [*To* HELEN.] I have another call to make. So, I must tear myself away. Uncle Job, I will be at our *rendezvous* at eleven.

JOB.

Very well; I will be there.

ARTHUR.

Good evening, ladies.

BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY.

Good-night.

ARTHUR.

Good-night, Charley. [*Bows to* HELEN. *She returns it. Aside, going.*] This playing a part—'tis fearful. [*Exit, C.*]

CHARLEY.

There goes a castle. [*Takes castle.*]

BLANCHE.

'Tis worth a queen. [*Takes queen.*]

HELEN, *aside.*

He is gone; my heart went with him.

JOB, *aside.*

Poor boy; shall I tell him of her promise? No, I will not; it would do no good. [*To* HELEN.] Why so sad, my child?

HELEN.

One must be sad with a breaking heart.

JOB.

What, engaged to a handsome, rich, fashionable man, and not happy! how is this? Do you not love him?

HELEN.

I hate him! Oh, sir, if you remember the days of your love, save me from this terrible sacrifice; if you cannot, I dare not think to what it will lead.

JOB.

My child, you choose your own fate; as you have sown, so must you reap.

HELEN.

Be it so. [*Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

I trust Helen has done her duty?

JOB.

She wishes to do it.

MRS. GRAFTON.

I hope so. Where is Mr. Beaufort?

JOB.

He had to pay another visit.

BLANCHE.

Checkmate, at last. I've won the game.

CHARLEY.

I believe chess is not in my line; it's too deep. Give me all-fours, that's my game.

JOB.

Blanche.

BLANCHE.

Well, cousin?

JOB.

Come here, I want to whisper. [*To* MRS. GRAFTON.] Pardon the impoliteness. [*Aside, to* BLANCHE.] When you clear the field, I will open the battery. [*Aloud.*] Keep it secret.

BLANCHE.

I will. Come, Helen, let us go into the library; Mr. Hearty is dying for his cigar.

CHARLEY.

The very thing I was longing for.

BLANCHE, *aside to* CHARLEY.

You see I always know what you desire. [JOB *speaks, while* HELEN, BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY *are going.*]

JOB.

Take care, Mr. Hearty, the enemy are in force two to one.

CHARLEY.

It matters not, sir; I am already a prisoner.

BLANCHE.

I mean to keep him so. "Victory or death" is my motto. [*Exeunt, C.*]

JOB, *aside.*

Youth! youth! what a priceless jewel art thou to thy possessor! trifle not with it, ye young, nor cast it from you; for once lost, it is beyond recall. [*To* MRS. GRAFTON.] How pleasant it is to find, in this generation of aged children, a little youthful freshness.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Yes, though it is rarely seen, even in the young.

JOB.

We were young once, Catharine; I call you so, for I ever remember the days of our childhood. My heart is heavy when I picture to myself what I might have been—what I am. Have you forgotten them?

MRS. GRAFTON.

No, I have not.

JOB.

Then, in the spirit of our childhood, I appeal to you: think of Helen. Do you feel that, in selecting Mr. Vane, you are doing what is best? Is she happy? Does she love him?

MRS. GRAFTON.

Perhaps not, now; she will, when she finds how worthy of her love he is.

JOB.

Is he? [*Takes newspaper from pocket.*] Read that. [*Hands paper.* MRS. GRAFTON *takes it.*] Then tell me if you can trust her happiness to such a scoundrel. [MRS. GRAFTON *appears to read. Aside.*] Half of that would convince a man, but women —[*Shrugs his shoulders.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

If this were true, I neither would nor could. I believe it false. I know it is too much the custom of many—the going about from house to house—maliciously hinting every thing bad except crime—sometimes even that—of any young man who may have offended their pride, or excited their jealousy. [*Gives back paper.*]

JOB, *aside.*

She would not be convinced though the sun stood still.

MRS. GRAFTON.

No! I reflected deeply before I chose him. Having done so, nothing but an undoubted proof of his unworthiness can change me; he must acknowledge it. When he does that the engagement ceases.

JOB, *aside.*

My appeal fails. I expected as much. This, also. [*Holds up paper.*] What is to be done now? Ah! the plot of Blanche—I will trust in that.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Yes; when he acknowledges it, the engagement ceases.

JOB.

Remember, I shall hold you to your promise. I will make him acknowledge that, [*holds up paper,*] or worse. [*Puts paper in pocket.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

I doubt it.

JOB.

I will try. I can but fail. [*Enter* BLANCHE, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Why, Blanche, where is Helen?

BLANCHE.

She has retired; she says her head aches. [*Aside.*] It is her heart not her head. [*Looks at* MRS. GRAFTON.] You have made it ache, you old Gorgon!

MRS. GRAFTON.

Excuse me, Mr. Merryweather; I must go to her.

JOB.

Certainly; by all means. [*Exit* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*] Well, Blanche, where did you leave Mr. Hearty?

BLANCHE.

Smoking his cigar. I believe the good-for-nothing fellow prefers that to me. I will be even with him. Well, Cousin Job, did aunt grant your appeal?

JOB.

No; not exactly.

BLANCHE.

I feared she would not. Now you shall hear my plot. Read that. [*Takes letter from pocket; hands to* JOB. *He takes it.*] Mr. Vane dropped it in the library this morning. I found it.

JOB, *reads letter aloud.*

"Herbert Vane, if you do not to-day return the watch you stole from me, under the plea of having it repaired, I will inform the police. I have seen your father; he told me I was a fool to trust you. Attend to this at once, or you will regret it.

"CHARLOTTE TEMPLE."

[*Speaks.*] A strange letter, indeed! a very strange letter! Why did you not give it me before? It would convince your aunt.

BLANCHE.

Not a bit of it. She would show it to Mr. Vane. Of course he would deny it; laugh, and say, [*imitating* VANE,] "Ah! really. 'Pon my life! Where did you get it? Rather shabby trick for one's friends to play, wasn't it?" He is shrewd enough for that. No; we must take him off his guard.

JOB.

An easy matter to say "take him off his guard"—a difficult one to do.

BLANCHE.

I have it all arranged. We shall need Charley's assistance.

JOB.

Then, you had better call him.

BLANCHE.

Not a word shall he know of the plot, save his own part; otherwise, he would put it all out of my head, with his [*imitates* CHARLEY] "Don't you think this would be better? Isn't that a little too steep?" or more such sapient remarks—for he is not very deep. No; not a word to him.

JOB.

You speak not very deferentially of your future husband.

BLANCHE.

Deferentially? Men were made to be women's slaves.

JOB.

I see you go in for "women's rights."

BLANCHE.

Yes, sir, I do that. Not, however, in public, nor on the platform, (as a few weak ones of our sex desire,) but at home, and in the nursery—where woman must and will rule "till time shall be no more."

JOB.

That is now, if we believe the papers.

BLANCHE.

Not quite yet; we are only a little a-head, by the last telegram. [*Enter* CHARLEY, *C.*] Now for our plot. [*Both look at letter.*]

CHARLEY.

A conspiracy, "'pon my honour," a conspiracy! A letter, too —"damning proof!"

BLANCHE.

You horrid fellow! You are always in the way, when least wanted.

CHARLEY.

Come, come! no hard words. I have taken you in the act. Confess! deliver up the letter. [*Solemnly.*] I will take the papers in this case, and give a written opinion to-morrow—or next year, —if condemned!

JOB, *interrupting.*

Pray, recommend us to mercy.

CHARLEY.

Silence! The court will not be interrupted. If condemned, appeal—get a new trial, then you will certainly go "unwhipt of justice." She is blind. She used to be honest; now she is *Non est*,—since she is burnt up, scales and all. Joking aside, what is this plot?

BLANCHE.

You are to know--

CHARLEY.

Well?

BLANCHE.

Nothing about it, sir. What you have to do, is, to do precisely what I shall tell you hereafter.

CHARLEY, *to* JOB.

Imperative mood, sir. You see what a tyrant she is.

JOB.

It is always so before marriage. Afterwards—

CHARLEY.

I shall be master.

BLANCHE.

We shall see about that.

JOB.

Well, I must go. If I stay longer, jesting with you, I shall keep Arthur waiting. Rehearse Mr. Hearty's part with him, Blanche. I will see you in the morning.

BLANCHE.

He shall be perfect.

JOB.

We will give the victim one chance for escape: should he refuse it, why then,—"Let the axe fall." Good-night, my dear. [*Offers to kiss her; Blanche draws back.*] What, mind an old fellow like me—a cousin, too? [*Aside to Blanche.*] Besides, it will make him jealous. [*They kiss each other.*] Good-night, Mr. Hearty. [*Going.*] We will win, Blanche; truth and love shall triumph—justice have her victim! [*Exit, C.*]

CHARLEY.

Look here, Blanche, I don't like that.

BLANCHE.

Don't like what?

CHARLEY.

Your kissing, that way. It isn't right.

BLANCHE, *aside.*

He is jealous. [*Aloud.*] Pshaw! he is only a cousin.

CHARLEY.

Confound such cousins! say I.

BLANCHE.

If you don't be quiet, I'll have a dozen next time.

CHARLEY.

Then I will. I want no more cousins, at any price. Now tell me the plot.

BLANCHE.

I shall do no such thing. What your part in it is, I will inform you to-morrow.

CHARLEY.

You shall suffer for this in the future!

BLANCHE.

I am content; let the future take care of itself. [*Charley looks cross. Blanche goes pats him.*] Poor little dear, if it behaves itself, and isn't cross, I will tell it what the plot is for!

CHARLEY.

That's a good girl! What is it?

BLANCHE.

To give that horrid Vane his "quietus."

CHARLEY.

That's great; it will serve him right. I say, Blanche, when are we to be married? have I to wait another century?

BLANCHE.

You know, Charley, I cannot marry, without aunt's consent, until I'm twenty-one.

CHARLEY.

She will never consent.

BLANCHE.

Then we must wait.

CHARLEY.

Why? I do not want your money; true, I have not much, still we can live in the country, and "Love in a Cottage."

BLANCHE.

"Stuff and nonsense!" "Love in a Cottage," indeed! I prefer comfort in the city to poverty in the country.

CHARLEY.

I suppose I must wait?

BLANCHE.

Certainly you must: however, this I promise, the day Helen marries Arthur, we will be married—aunt or no aunt.

CHARLEY.

Do you mean it? Is it a compact?

BLANCHE.

As true as I live.

CHARLEY.

Hurrah! Let's sign and seal it.

BLANCHE.

How?

CHARLEY.

I will show you.

BLANCHE.

There are no witnesses. [*Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C., unperceived.*]

CHARLEY.

Never mind them; it will be binding without. [*Kisses her.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Blanche!

CHARLEY, *aside.*

A witness, with a vengeance!

BLANCHE, *aside.*

She has caught me this time. [*Exeunt* BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY, *opposite sides, running.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

A modern flirtation.

End of Third Act.

Act Fourth.

SCENE FIRST.

Moonlight View of Union Square. *Enter* ARTHUR, *L. H.*

ARTHUR, *alone.*

It is now [*takes out watch*] five minutes to eleven. Uncle will soon be here. I will wait without. [*Crosses stage.*] Life! life! what an ever-changing picture art thou! You moon, smiles calmly peaceful, over this slumbering hive—of weary workers, and

heartless drones. Lasts it? No! A storm comes on, and in a moment, all is blackness! Such is my life's picture. A few short hours ago, it breathed through golden tints, now the storm has come, and darkness shadows it. What consolation have I? my philosophy? I find too late it is false and hollow; it is pleasant to the eye, but there is dust within. [*Enter* HACKMAN, *R. H.*]

HACKMAN.

Want a carriage, sir?

ARTHUR.

No.

HACKMAN.

Drive you anywheres to-night, sir, half price.

ARTHUR.

I tell you, no.

HACKMAN, *aside.*

He's a snob—haint got a dollar. [*Exit, R. H.*]

ARTHUR.

That man is happier far than I—life without mind—existence without thought. [*Enter, R. H.*, VANE, BROWN, JONES, SMITH, *and* ROBINSON.]

BROWN.

I say, boys, let's go in and take a drink.

JONES, SMITH, AND ROBINSON.

All right!

JONES.

Who stands treat?

SMITH.

Vane, of course.

BROWN, JONES, AND ROBINSON.

All right!

VANE.

"'Pon my life," you are always very willing to drink at my expense; not to-night, however. I am going to Deuce's.

BROWN.

Well, we won't leave you: will we, boys? We'll go with him.

JONES, SMITH, AND ROBINSON.

All right!

VANE.

Then come along.

BROWN, JONES, SMITH, AND ROBINSON.

All right! [*Exeunt, L. H.*]

ARTHUR.

The tree and its parasites; while there is any sap left, they cling to it lovingly, shutting out the brighter life—when withered, gracefully droop away, enclose some other in their insidious coils, and leave it lone and desolate—a ruined monument of treacherous friendship. "Such is life." [*Enter* BOB, *L. H.*, THOMAS, *R. H.*]

THOMAS.

Halloo, Bob! you're all out, aint you?

BOB.

I'm around—some.

THOMAS.

Why, you look like a bright door-knob!

BOB.

Guess I don't look bad.

THOMAS.

Bad—you're mighty purty, you are!

BOB.

Look a-here, old squaretoes, don't try that on; I haint got nothing to lend. "Neary a red."

THOMAS.

Oh, get out! Where are you going?

BOB.

To a ball.

THOMAS.

Pretty late, isn't it?

BOB.

'Taint fashionable to go before next day.

THOMAS.

Where is it?

BOB.

At the old wigwam.

THOMAS.

What's it for?

BOB.

Prim'ry election ball. I'm going to run for alderman.

THOMAS.

You won't be elected, will you?

BOB.

Won't I! I've got the irons [*imitates handcuffing*] on the wire-pullers. Besides, I'm leader of the German.

THOMAS.

You don't say so!

BOB.

Don't I! I've chalked out a stunning figure!

THOMAS.

What is it?

BOB.

The Sachems' scalp dance!—to tickle the ins out. Come along, old "Kiss-me-quick!" it'll be jolly!

THOMAS.

I dar'n't—I'm a Republican.

BOB.

Then go to blazes, "old smashpipes!" Wood up

THOMAS.

You're a smart one! you're going it! I say, Bob, we're going to have a ball to-morrow night.

BOB.

You don't say so? can't you ring a feller in?

THOMAS.

We mought; drop in, we'll be happy to see you.

BOB.

That's jolly, old peg-top! I'll spin in—I'll be thar. [*Exit*, THOMAS, *L. H.* *Enter* HACKMAN, *R. H.*]

HACKMAN.

Want a carriage, sir?

BOB.

Guess I don't want nothing else.

HACKMAN.

Where shall I drive, sir?

BOB.

To old Tammany. What'll you charge?

HACKMAN.

Dollar, sir.

BOB.

Now, look a-here, old "stick-in-the-mud," you can't come that game over me; "I'm up to snuff." I'll give you a half.

HACKMAN.

Do you want to take the bread away from me?

BOB.

Gammon! I can "smell a rat."

HACKMAN.

You're a "*downy* cove!" you are. I 'spose I must.

BOB.

Then start your machine. [*Going.*] Why don't you come along! [*Exeunt* BOB *and* HACKMAN, *R. H.*]

ARTHUR.

These puppets steal their master's words, with their cast-off clothes. [*Enter* JOB, *L. H.*]

JOB.

I am sorry I have kept you waiting.

ARTHUR.

Never mind, uncle. I have been reading "Life below Stairs."

JOB.

Suppose we walk?

ARTHUR.

I am ready. [JOB *and* ARTHUR *go, L. H.—meet* BEGGAR, *enter, L. H.*]

BEGGAR.

Noble gentleman, give me sixpence to buy some bread—my children are starving!

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Most probably this beggar is an impostor. Yet perchance my mite may prevent a crime. [*Aloud.*] Here, my good woman, is a sixpence for you.

BEGGAR.

Heaven bless your kind face, sir! you have saved my children from starving! [*Exit, R. H.*]

JOB.

My boy, you forget what you are.

ARTHUR.

What I am!

JOB.

Yes; a cynic.

ARTHUR.

Pshaw! it was only a sixpence.

JOB.

A penny, given in true charity, shows the "heart is in the right place."

ARTHUR.

Come along, uncle, you are getting sentimental; and I hate sentiment.

JOB.

Even to a beggar, eh? Well, let us go. [*Exeunt, L. H.*]

SCENE SECOND.

Entrance to the Hell. Enter, R. H., VANE, BROWN, JONES, SMITH, *and* ROBINSON; VANE *crosses to L. H., rings bell. Enter* SERVANT, *L. H., during business.*

BROWN.

Here we are at last, "Safe and snug as a bug in a rug."

JONES, SMITH, AND ROBINSON.

All right.

VANE, *to* SERVANT.

How is the game to-night?

SERVANT.

Not very lively, sir.

BROWN.

We'll wake 'em up; won't we, boys?

JONES, SMITH, AND ROBINSON.

All right. [*Exeunt, L. H.*, VANE, SMITH, *and* ROBINSON; BROWN *stops* JONES.]

BROWN.

See here, Jones; "hold up a bit."

JONES.

Halloo! "What's up?"

BROWN.

Vane's played out—he's bust.

JONES.

The devil he is?

BROWN.

Yes; "flat as a flounder." So, if he wants to borrow, [*puts finger to nose,*] you know, "a nod's as good as a wink."

JONES.

I'll keep my "weather eye" open. [*Exeunt, L. H. Enter* JOB *and* ARTHUR, *R. H.*]

JOB.

And this is the entrance to the labyrinth, where, once lost, there is no escape, save death.

ARTHUR.

No three-headed Cheberus (Jenks would say) to bark intruders back. "*Facilis descensus Averni,*" uncle. [*Crosses, L. H.; rings bell; door opens.*] The way to hell lies open.

JOB.

I pray the Fates to grant a safe return. [*Exeunt, L. H.*]

SCENE THIRD.

VANE *discovered seated by end of Pharo Table, facing, R. H.,* DEALER *in his place, C. of Table.* BROWN, JONES, SMITH, *and* ROBINSON *playing at Table. During Scene,* PLAYERS *give* DEALER *Money; he returns Chips.*

DEALER.

Knave loses—deuce wins. [*Takes chips from table.*]

VANE.

Lost again! [*Aside.*] Will the tide never turn—the ebb cease?

DEALER.

Now deal, gentleman. [*Shuffles cards.*]

VANE.

Hold! Give me a fresh pack. [DEALER *hands another pack. Aside, while shuffling.*] I will try if Fortune will not smile in her new dress. [*Hands pack to* DEALER. *He cuts it; puts in pharo-box, during business.* VANE, *aloud.*] Bring me some brandy and a cigar. [SERVANT *hands them to* VANE.]

DEALER.

Queen head, gentleman—make your bets.

VANE.

Fifty on the knave! [*Puts chips on knave.*]

DEALER.

Knave loses—queen wins. [*Takes chips.*]

VANE, *aside.*

The cursed luck! [*Aloud.*] Fifty on the seven, nine. [*Puts chips on seven.*]

DEALER.

Nine loses—nine wins. [*Takes half of chips on seven.*]

VANE, *aloud.*

A split! [*Aside.*] Fortune turns her face with half a smile.

DEALER.

Eight loses—king wins. [*Enter* JOB *and* ARTHUR, *L. H.*]

JOB.

Then this is Hades?

ARTHUR.

Yes; and the lair of the "*Tiger.*"

DEALER.

Deuce loses—Ace wins. [*Enter* DEUCE, *C.*]

DEUCE.

Ah! Mr. Beaufort, I am delighted to see you! [*Shakes hands.*] This is the first time you have favoured us, "d'you see."

DEALER.

Five loses—seven wins.

ARTHUR.

I very rarely "fight the *Tiger*."

DEUCE.

Ha! ha! very good, "d'you see." Who is your friend? Introduce me.

ARTHUR.

Uncle, let me introduce Mr. Deuce. Mr. Merryweather. [JOB *and* DEUCE *bow.*] Is a stranger in town. I have brought him here to show him one of the "lions" of the metropolis.

DEALER.

Knave loses—queen wins.

DEUCE.

You flatter me, "d'you see!"

JOB.

I have often heard of you, Mr. Deuce. You wield an iron hand here.

DEALER.

King loses—ten wins.

DEUCE.

Still, to my friends, it is gloved, "d'you see!"

DEALER.

Tré loses—Deuce wins.

DEUCE.

Come, gentlemen, walk in, and have some supper. There is a fine pair of canvas-backs, and a little champagne, "*Le prémier*, 'd'you see.'"

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Please the palate, excite the brain; and then, "remorse will down."

DEALER.

Eight loses—queen wins. [*Going towards back.*]

ARTHUR, *aside to* JOB.

You see [*points to Vane*] my rival is not a saint.

JOB, *aside to* ARTHUR.

No; better marry a beggar, than a gambler.

DEUCE, *calls.*

A bottle of Cliquot, "d'you see." Walk in. [*To* JOB *and* ARTHUR.]

DEALER.

Four loses—Deuce wins. New deal, gentlemen. [*Exit* JOB, ARTHUR, DEUCE, *C. During this scene the playing never ceases. Shuffles pack—puts in box.*]

VANE, *aside.*

All gone but this paltry stake. [*Holds up chips.*] Curses on them! [*Aloud.*] Some brandy. [SERVANT *hands it.*]

DEALER.

Deuce head; gentlemen, make your bets. [VANE *puts down chips on a card—withdraws them.*]

VANE.

No; I will not bet this time. Go on with the deal.

DEALER.

Bets all made, gentlemen? [*Deals cards.*] Ten loses—seven wins.

VANE, *aside.*

The seven has won three times, I will stake my last upon its losing the fourth. [*Puts chips on seven. Aloud.*] I copper the seven.

DEALER.

Knave loses—seven wins.

VANE, *aside.*

My last dollar is gone, but fortune shall smile. I will borrow some money of Brown.

DEALER.

King loses—king wins. [VANE *beckons* BROWN *down stage.*]

VANE.

Brown, lend me some money, will you?

BROWN.

Bless me, my dear fellow, I left my pocket-book at home.

VANE.

I never told you that. [*Beckons* JONES.]

DEALER.

Six loses—four wins.

VANE.

Jones, will you lend me some money?

JONES.

Sorry, Vane, haven't got a V about me.

VANE.

I never answered you so.

DEALER.

One turn, gentlemen—deuce, queen, knave.

VANE, *aside.*

Deuce, queen, knave—the queen must lose, the knave shall win. I will venture once again, and if my good angel has not forsaken me, I shall quadruple the amount.

DEALER.

Bets all made, gentlemen?

VANE.

Stop, time. [*Goes to side-table, writes check; comes to Pharo-table, places it with copper on queen, to knave.*] I copper the queen—knave. [*Enter* JOB, ARTHUR, DEUCE, *C.*]

DEALER.

Knave loses—queen wins.

VANE, *aside.*

I was ruined before—to-morrow I shall be dishonoured.

DEUCE, *to* JOB.

Fortune is a queer jade, sir. "D'you see" that young man, sir? [*Points to* VANE, *going, exit, C.*]

DEALER.

Four loses—eight wins.

JOB.

Yes—Mr. Vane.

DEUCE.

Well, sir, "d'you see" he is ruined? [ARTHUR *comes down stage.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Herbert ruined?

DEALER.

Five loses—nine wins.

DEUCE.

He has lost his last dollar—and, "d'you see," that check is not worth a red!

DEALER.

Deuce loses—knave wins.

JOB.

Then to-morrow he will be disgraced.

DEUCE.

Pardon me! I shall return it, "d'you see," to-night.

DEALER.

Knave loses—deuce wins.

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Ruined! Now I am revenged! Revenged—down, unworthy, base thought! Though he has betrayed me—robbed me of my happiness, still, for her sake, and for sake of the olden time, I will help him.

DEALER.

Eight loses—queen wins.

ARTHUR, *to* DEUCE.

Mr. Deuce, will you oblige me by returning to Mr. Vane what he has lost to-night; in the morning let me know the amount, I will refund it.

DEUCE.

Pardon me. I am going to do it myself, "d'you see."

DEALER.

Ace loses—nine wins.

ARTHUR.

I insist.

DEUCE.

Well, if you insist, I'll tell you what I will do! "D'you see," I'll go you halves. To no other compromise will I agree.

DEALER.

Nine loses—four wins.

ARTHUR.

Well, be it so. I charge you not to inform him of my share in this matter.

DEUCE.

Certainly not, if you desire it.

DEALER.

Seven loses—deuce wins.

JOB.

Mr. Deuce, I honour you for this act. [*Shake hands.*]

DEUCE.

I hope we are none of us as "bad as we seem," "d'you see."

ARTHUR.

Hereafter, Mr. Deuce [*shake hands*] I shall think the "devil is never as black as he is painted."

DEUCE.

Now, "'pon my honour," you flatter me, "d'you see."

JOB AND ARTHUR.

Good-night.

DEUCE.

Good-night, gentlemen. Call again. [*Goes to table; gets bills and check; during business.* JOB *and* ARTHUR *going.*]

JOB.

My dear boy, I love you. If those be the acts of a cynic, heaven send us more such.

ARTHUR.

Pshaw, uncle! That's more of your sentiment. Come along. [*Exeunt, L. H. Enter* VANE, *C. Comes down stage.*]

DEALER.

Five loses. Deuce wins.

DEUCE, *to* VANE.

Pardon me, my dear fellow, when I say I have watched you.

VANE.

Sir!

DEUCE.

You have lost much; and this check—[*shows check*]—I know it is worthless.

VANE.

Do you intend to insult me?

DEUCE.

Far from it: I intend to save you. Believe me, you have neither the nerve nor the skill for play. Now listen. I will return this check, with the two hundred you have lost, on your solemn promise you will play no more. Do you consent?

VANE.

I do. Deuce, you have proved to me a truer friend, than those leeches—[*points to table*]—who have fattened on my gold!

DEUCE.

Go home, my dear fellow, and sleep, "d'ye see," upon your good resolution.

VANE.

I will. Good-night.

DEUCE.

Good-night. [VANE *going.*]

VANE, *aside.*

But this is degradation. [*Exit, L. H.*]

DEALER.

Knave loses. Deuce wins.

DEUCE.

No more to-night, gentlemen. "The bank is closed."

End of Fourth Act.

Act Fifth.

SCENE FIRST.

Ball Room at MRS. GRAFTON'S. *At rising of Curtain,* THOMAS *discovered dusting Chairs.*

THOMAS, *alone.*

This giving a spread aint "the cheese"—it don't pay; I likes the kicking part; but when it comes to the feeding—my eyes! can't them fashionables go it! A menagery aint a circumstance; perliteness aint nowhere! Fifty on 'em sings out at once, "Waiter, get me a glass!" "Fetch along a plate!" "Hurry up that spoon!" "'Cut your stick' for that knife!" Then if they aint there right off, phew! they empties 'em right under the table, slops and all—wipes the knife on the cloth, pitches into the oysters like blazes, knocks over big pile of plates, and down they comes with a stunning "*kerswash!*" [*Enter* BOB, *C.*]

BOB.

Well, old spondulix! here I am, right side up.

THOMAS.

You've come mighty early, haint you?

BOB.

That's the ticket. I likes to see the gals, 'fore they're wilted: [*looks around:*] going to do things up rather "Jimmy," aint you?

THOMAS.

Young man, we aint going to do nothing "shorter." We're "tip tops!"

BOB.

Oh! "cork up!" I say, old "bile-your-buster," how 'bout vittals and liquor?

THOMAS.

They's all right—fust-rate! I've put the best on 'em away—safe.

BOB.

That's jolly! You knows your business.

THOMAS.

That's so. I say, Bob, how was the 'lection ball? "was it a go?"

BOB.

Rather think it was; it's the "Jimmiest" thing of the season. It took so slick! I'm going to run on split ticket for mayor.

THOMAS.

You don't say so? How 'bout the scalp dance?

BOB.

It was a "ten-strike," it was! I'll give you a touch. Lize and I did it up in this style. [*Dances.*] Didn't they, hi! hi! Oh, no! neary a bit; but when they came to the grand finally [*dances*] didn't they yell! I swow, it was about the all-firedest [*dances. Enter* BLANCHE, *R. H., aside.*] settler, by the holy poker! [*Exit, L. H.*]

BLANCHE.

Who is that?

THOMAS.

Mr. Vane's *tiger*, Miss.

BLANCHE.

Let him wait in the hall. [*Aside.*] That *tiger* must be chained.

THOMAS.

Yes, Miss. [*Exit, C.*]

BLANCHE.

The mine is charged—the train laid—the match ready. We wait but the signal, to blow his plans to atoms. [*Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Blanche!

BLANCHE.

Yes, aunt.

MRS. GRAFTON.

After your conduct last evening, I wish to repeat, that, hereafter, Mr. Hearty must discontinue his visits. [MRS. GRAFTON *goes rings bell, during business.*]

BLANCHE.

Yes, aunt. [*Aside.*] This is rather too much. I believe I shall have to run away. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Has Mr. Black arrived?

THOMAS.

Yes, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Tell him the German commences at one. Has Mr. Vandyke Brown finished laying the table?

THOMAS.

Yes, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Tell him, I shall be down in a moment. Is Mr. Harp here?

THOMAS.

Yes, madam.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Ask him to come up. [THOMAS *bows. Exit, C.*] Blanche, I desire you to remain here, to receive, during my absence,

BLANCHE.

Yes, aunt. [MRS. GRAFTON, *exit, C.*] For the present, I must submit; her star is in the ascendant: when the bubble bursts, then—[*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Charles Hearty! [*Enter* CHARLEY, *C. Exit* THOMAS, *C.*]

CHARLEY.

Well, Blanche, how are you to-night? [*Tries to kiss her.* BLANCHE *draws back.*]

BLANCHE.

No nonsense, Charley—to business! Are you up in your part?

CHARLEY.

Yes; letter perfect.

BLANCHE.

Then all is prepared for the execution. [*Enter* BAND, *C. Take places by piano.*]

CHARLEY.

Come, Blanche, there is no one here. Let us have a waltz.

BLANCHE.

I agree. [CHARLEY *goes to piano.*]

CHARLEY, *to* LEADER.

Will you be kind enough to play a waltz? [BAND *plays waltz.* CHARLEY *and* BLANCHE *dance.* *Enter* MRS. GRAFTON, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Blanche, what does this mean?

CHARLEY.

Good evening, Mrs. Grafton.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Once for all. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Herbert Vane. [*Enter* VANE, *C.*, *with hat.* *Exit* THOMAS, *C.* *Whistle outside.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Ah, Herbert, [*shake hands,*] I am glad you have come so early. Helen is not quite ready; she will be here. [*Enter* HELEN, *C.*]

HELEN.

I am here, mother.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Now she can answer for herself. [HELEN *and* VANE *come down stage.* *During scene* BAND *plays softly, during business.*]

BLANCHE, *aside, to* CHARLEY.

We got off easily that time.

CHARLEY, *aside, to* BLANCHE.

We were mighty lucky!

VANE, *aside, to* HELEN.

How beautiful you look to-night! [HELEN *bows coldly.*] Why so cold? will you not grant me one kind look—a single smile?

HELEN, *aside, to* VANE.

The heart smiles, sir; you bought the body. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Job Merryweather, Mr. Arthur Beaufort. [*Enter* JOB *and* ARTHUR, *C. Exit* THOMAS, *C.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Good evening, Mr. Merryweather. [JOB *and* MRS. GRAFTON *shake hands.*] Mr. Beaufort, I am happy to see you. [ARTHUR *bows to* MRS. GRAFTON, HELEN, *etc. Comes down stage, R. H. Whistle outside.*]

JOB.

Good evening. Why, Helen, how handsome you look! [*Shake hands.*]

HELEN.

Misery in gold, sir.

JOB, *to* BLANCHE.

Well, Blanche, is the case ready for trial? I see the prisoner is in court. [*Points to* VANE.]

BLANCHE.

Would I were his judge!

JOB.

Then he had better say his prayers at once. [*Enter* THOMAS, *C. Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith. [*Enter, C.,* MR. *and* MRS. SMITH; *bow to* MRS. GRAFTON *and* HELEN, *during business.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Leave a dying child at home—to them the "Dance of death." [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Brown, Mr. Jones. [*Enter, C., bow, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

In prosperity, friends; in adversity, foes! [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mrs. and Miss Mary Sappy. [*Enter, C., bow, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Gluttony and Economy will be taken into supper at least ten times. [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. Robinson. [*Enter C., bows, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

A toadstool, very like a genuine mushroom! [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mr. and Mrs. Fidget, Miss Fidget. [*Enter, C., bow, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

The Gull, the Buzzard and the Crow. [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Count Spousa. [*Enter C., bows, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Titled poverty in search of vulgar wealth. [*Whistle outside.*]

THOMAS.

Mrs. Stupid, the Misses Stupid. [*Enter, C., bow, etc.*]

ARTHUR, *aside.*

Seeking for the "goose with the golden egg." [*Whistle outside.* BAND *plays two bars of the Lancers; company form, during business.* VANE *puts hat on piano.* JOB *goes to* ARTHUR.]

JOB.

Well, Arthur, have you no partner?

ARTHUR.

No, uncle; "I don't lance."

JOB.

O, come! ask Miss Sappy.

ARTHUR.

I cannot get near enough. Look at those hoops!

JOB.

You are incorrigible. I will dance myself. [*Goes takes place —"The Lancers." After dance goes to* VANE. *During scene,* BAND *plays slow music.*]

JOB.

Mr. Vane, allow me a word with you.

VANE.

With much pleasure. [*Both come down stage.*]

JOB.

I am compelled to perform a painful duty. Pardon me; but I must speak the truth.

VANE.

Well, sir; go on.

JOB.

Mr. Vane, you are engaged to a woman whom you neither love nor are beloved by.

VANE.

Sir, I cannot recognize you right to interfere.

JOB.

I do it in kindness. I wish to give you one chance of escape —from exposure. I was present last night when you wagered that worthless check.

VANE.

Sir; your gray hairs alone protect you.

JOB.

My gray hairs, sir, can protect themselves. No more of this. I appeal to you as a man—resign this noble, loving woman; do not immolate her on the "altar of your poverty."

VANE.

I will not resign her!

JOB.

Then you have sealed your own fate!

VANE.

I will hazard the die! [VANE *goes to* HELEN. BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY *go to* JOB.]

BLANCHE.

Well, cousin, what is the verdict?

JOB.

"Let the axe fall."

BLANCHE.

Come, Charley, we must fire the train.

CHARLEY.

Then, farewell to all his dreams. [*Exeunt* BLANCHE *and* CHARLEY, *L. H.* BAND *plays a March. Enter* BLANCHE, *L. H. Company form in couples.* MRS. GRAFTON *and* JOB *after company;* HELEN *and* VANE *after them;* BLANCHE *and* ARTHUR *last. When all the company have left the stage, C.,* JOB *turns.* BAND *exit, C.*]

JOB.

Stop, Catharine, do you remember your promise?

MRS. GRAFTON.

I do. [JOB *rings bell. Enter* THOMAS, *C.*]

JOB, *to* THOMAS.

Is that gentleman still waiting?

THOMAS.

Yes, sir.

JOB.

Show him up. [*Exit* THOMAS, *C., ushers in, C.,* CHARLEY, *disguised as a policeman, with false beard. Exit* THOMAS, *C.*]

JOB, *to* CHARLEY.

That is Mr. Vane. [*Points to* VANE.]

CHARLEY.

Herbert Vane, I have a warrant against you; I arrest you on a complaint, made by Charlotte Temple, for stealing a watch.

VANE.

It is false! It is a lie!

JOB.

Is that false, also? [*Shows* VANE *letter.*] Catharine, there is the proof. [*Gives* MRS. GRAFTON *letter; she takes it.*]

MRS. GRAFTON.

Herbert, I charge you, on your honour, is this accusation true?

VANE.

I confess it is. [*Aside.*] The game is lost.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Job, I redeem my promise. [CHARLEY *pulls off beard, throws cap up.*]

CHARLEY.

Hurrah! Blanche, we have won the game!

VANE.

What does this masquerade mean?

JOB.

It means, sir, that our plot, to convince my friend of your unworthiness, has succeeded. It was done in this manner, to give you one last chance for reform; receive it in that spirit. It is known but to these few, and with them it will remain a secret.

VANE.

I thank you, sir, for this forbearance.

JOB.

Mr. Vane, I am an old man; take my advice: It is "Never too late to mend." When you leave here, and re-embark on that treacherous ocean, (*The World,*) make honour your rudder, integrity your helmsman, truth your polar star; then trim your sails by education, and, with faith at your masthead, you may stretch away over life's troubled waters boldly, self-reliantly. Lose honour, you are adrift upon an unknown sea, helpless and hopeless through all eternity.

VANE.

Accept my gratitude for your advice. I hope to profit by it. Had I received the education of a gentleman—not been taught from my infancy to consider myself one without it—I should not now be in this degrading position. [VANE *bows, going aside.*] "Boldness did not win the game." [*Exit, C.*]

JOB.

Now, Catharine, finish the good work you have so well begun. Look on them. [*Points to* HELEN and ARTHUR.] They are worthy of each other. Make them happy.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Job, I will. I acknowledge my error. I will atone for it. I

looked through the veil of prejudice, with the eye of the world. Now, the hand of truth has rent the veil asunder. [*Goes to* ARTHUR.] Mr. Beaufort, my daughter loves you. [ARTHUR *shrugs his shoulders.*] It is true, she gave you up to fulfil a promise made to her dead father—more of that, hereafter. Take her. [*Places* HELEN'S *hand in* ARTHUR'S.] She is worthy of you; for if she prove as good a wife as she has been daughter, you have a treasure, indeed!

ARTHUR.

Helen!

HELEN.

Arthur! [*They embrace.*]

ARTHUR.

We will never part more.

HELEN.

Can you forgive me for the pain I have caused you?

ARTHUR.

Forgive you? A life of devotion shall be my atonement, for having ever doubted you.

JOB, *to* ARTHUR.

Well, my dear boy, have I conquered?

ARTHUR.

Yes, uncle; I banish forever my cynical philosophy; it is unsubstantial, foundationless—without, it is a palace; within, a prison.

CHARLEY, *aside, to* BLANCHE.

They have forgotten us.

BLANCHE.

It seems so.

CHARLEY.

Shall we run?

BLANCHE.

Let us first try a little humiliation. [*They go to* Mrs. Grafton.] Aunty, won't you give us your blessing?

JOB.

They have laboured well, Catharine; they deserve their reward.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Blanche, I have been too severe with you. I see it now. I am sorry for it.

BLANCHE.

Never mind. The past is forgotten. We will bury the hatchet.

MRS. GRAFTON.

Take her, Mr Hearty. [*Joins hands.*] May she be as good a wife as you deserve.

CHARLEY.

Never fear; I shall keep her in order.

BLANCHE.

Look out, or I will verify the old proverb!

JOB.

What proverb?

BLANCHE.

That the "gray mare is the better horse!"

JOB, *to* Mrs. Grafton.

As for us, Catharine, we are too old to think of love, so we must be content to be happy in their happiness, and strive to guide their children safely, through the shoals, and rocks, on which we were wrecked. [*Enter* Bob, *C.*]

BOB.

Excuse me, ladies; Mr. Vane's hat. [Bob *goes to piano, takes hat, during business.*]

BLANCHE, *aside.*

The tiger is unchained, but he is quite subdued.

BOB, *aside.*

I'm in at the death! It's mighty jolly, I don't think! My master's played out, and my place is "to let." So guess I'd better mosey. [*Going.*] So, mosey it is! [*Bows, exit C.* BAND *enter, C. Whistle outside.*]

VOICE, *outside.*

Mr. Vane's carriage. [*Pause.*] All right—drive on!

JOB, *comes down stage.*

OUR PLAY IS DONE, THE WHEAT IS THRASHED:
GARNER IT IN YOUR HEARTS, BLOW THE CHAFF AWAY.

[*Bows.*]

Band plays a Polka. Company dance in second Room.

Tableau. Curtain falls.

FINIS.

WHEAT AND CHAFF.

A

COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

D. WADSWORTH WAINWRIGHT, M.D.

NEW YORK:
CHARLES ROE, PUBLISHER,
697 BROADWAY.

1858

Price *25 Cents.*

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